

Living with Arthritis

Jim Starshak: Exercise Instructor and Fitness Trainer Knows Movement is Medicine for OA



He jokes about making more than 80 parachute jumps from perfectly good airplanes. But Jim Starshak's 20-plus years of Army Special Forces service have taken a

toll on his joints, resulting in osteoarthritis particularly in his knees, ankles, shoulders, and hands.

Jim, of Shawnee, Kansas, turned to a new, physically-active career after leaving the service. He started The Home Gym, a home-based business where he does personal fitness training, Tai Chi, and CPR/First Aid classes at clients' homes, organizations, or places of business.

Jim's involvement with the Arthritis Foundation began about

three years ago, when he became a certified PACE instructor (now called The Arthritis Foundation Exercise Program). He subsequently became certified to teach the Arthritis Foundation Tai Chi Program.

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In addition to teaching Arthritis Foundation Tai Chi classes, Jim serves on the Exercise & Health Promotion Committee, teaches CPR to program instructors, and coordinates practice sessions for the Tai Chi for Arthritis instructor workshops.

Jim shared, "I truly consider exercise to be my 'drug of choice' to mitigate my arthritis and low back pain. In addition to Tai Chi, I enjoy bike riding and weight lifting. Although I am not in as good of shape as I once was, I still like

to consider myself a 'walking, talking billboard' for the holistic value of exercise. Besides reducing pain, exercise has improved my balance and range of motion, helped my posture, and provided a means to reduce the stresses of life."